

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 409

September 12, 1995, 9:21 a.m.
Page S-13316 Temp. Record

WELFARE REFORM BILL/TAP and WAGE Programs Option

SUBJECT: Family Self-Sufficiency Act of 1995 . . . H.R. 4. Conrad/Bradley amendment No. 2529 to the Dole modified perfecting amendment No. 2280 to the committee substitute amendment.

ACTION: AMENDMENT REJECTED, 44-54

SYNOPSIS: As reported with a committee substitute amendment, H.R. 4, the Family Self-Sufficiency Act of 1995, will overhaul six of the Nation's ten largest welfare programs.

The Dole modified perfecting amendment would strike the provisions of the committee substitute amendment and insert in lieu thereof substitute provisions, entitled "The Work Opportunity Act of 1995."

The Conrad/Bradley amendment would add the provisions of a welfare reform bill introduced by Senator Conrad to the bill, and would give States the option of either participating in the Work Opportunity Act as proposed in the Dole amendment or in the provisions proposed in the Conrad/Bradley amendment. After electing either option, a State would have to follow that option for the next 4 years, at which time it could switch. If the latter option were chosen, total funding would have to be at least as high as it would have been if the former option had been chosen. The amendment would establish two programs: the Transitional Aid Program (TAP) and the Work and Gainful Employment Act (WAGE). The TAP program would serve as a replacement for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. Funding would be provided as an entitlement using the Medicaid matched rate. To be eligible for aid, a family would have to meet the following criteria: it would have to have a needy child; it would have to comply with the WAGE Program; and it would have to comply with paternity and child support requirements. States would be required to maintain categorical Medicaid eligibility for at least 1 year after a parent gained employment. States would be required to ensure the well-being of children in families that were denied aid. The WAGE program would combine five current welfare programs (the JOBS Program, emergency assistance, AFDC child care, transitional child care, and the administrative costs of AFDC) into a new block grant program for job training. By fiscal year (FY) 2000 55 percent of non-exempt TAP recipients would have to be enrolled in the WAGE Program.

(See other side)

YEAS (44)		NAYS (54)			NOT VOTING (2)	
Republicans (0 or 0%)	Democrats (44 or 96%)	Republicans (52 or 100%)	Democrats (2 or 4%)		Republicans (2)	Democrats (0)
Akaka	Inouye	Abraham	Hutchison	Baucus	Cochran ⁻²	
Biden	Johnston	Ashcroft	Inhofe	Kohl	Simpson ^{-2AN}	
Bingaman	Kennedy	Bennett	Jeffords			
Boxer	Kerrey	Bond	Kassebaum			
Bradley	Kerry	Brown	Kempthorne			
Breaux	Lautenberg	Burns	Kyl			
Bryan	Leahy	Campbell	Lott			
Bumpers	Levin	Chafee	Lugar			
Byrd	Lieberman	Coats	Mack			
Conrad	Mikulski	Cohen	McCain			
Daschle	Moseley-Braun	Coverdell	McConnell			
Dodd	Moynihan	Craig	Murkowski			
Dorgan	Murray	D'Amato	Nickles			
Exon	Nunn	DeWine	Packwood			
Feingold	Pell	Dole	Pressler			
Feinstein	Pryor	Domenici	Roth			
Ford	Reid	Faircloth	Santorum			
Glenn	Robb	Frist	Shelby			
Graham	Rockefeller	Gorton	Smith			
Harkin	Sarbanes	Gramm	Snowe			
Heflin	Simon	Grams	Specter			
Hollings	Wellstone	Grassley	Stevens			
		Gregg	Thomas			
		Hatch	Thompson			
		Hatfield	Thurmond			
		Helms	Warner			

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

Those favoring the amendment contended:

The Conrad amendment would give States an alternate welfare reform plan and would then let them choose between that plan and the plan offered by the Dole amendment. We believe many or most States would choose the Conrad amendment, but we are willing to let them decide. Under the Conrad amendment, like the Dole amendment, the emphasis would be on making welfare a temporary benefit while employment was sought. States would be given nearly complete flexibility in deciding how to reach that goal. Like the Dole amendment, the Conrad amendment would block grant work programs, and would set benchmarks to meet. In fact, the Conrad amendment would enact a tougher work requirement than the Dole amendment--it would require 55 percent, instead of 50 percent, of welfare recipients to work by FY 2000. Funding for the work program would be as a capped entitlement block grant. Each year the amount provided would be increased by 3 percent. Temporary assistance benefits, though, would not be capped under the Conrad amendment. Leaving such benefits open-ended makes simple common sense because of economic uncertainties. A State that dipped into a severe recession, or that was struck by a natural disaster, might need a short-term increase. The Conrad amendment would provide funds for any needed short-term increase; the Dole amendment would not. Therefore, the Conrad amendment would preserve the needed safety net for children on welfare. We heartily agree that welfare should be a temporary benefit for most Americans while they are seeking employment, but we oppose block granting all welfare because the result could be harm for children. The Conrad amendment would protect children better than the Dole amendment, and therefore merits our support.

Those opposing the amendment contended:

We commend the Senator from North Dakota for his thoughtful amendment. Certainly it has praiseworthy elements. Nevertheless, we oppose it because it would cost too much and because it would preserve welfare as an entitlement. The bottom line is this amendment has, according to the Congressional Budget Office, a more costly bottom line than does the Dole amendment. The United States is nearly \$5 trillion in debt; given such an enormous debt, it would be irresponsible to give States the option of accepting a welfare reform plan that would be more costly for United States taxpayers. The worst part of the amendment, though, is that it would continue to provide basic AFDC assistance (though renamed as TAP assistance) as an entitlement. Entitlement spending has a disturbing tendency to grow uncontrollably. Most of the \$5 trillion in debt is due to growth in entitlement programs, not in discretionary accounts. Our fear is that States that accepted the Conrad amendment option would end up not ending welfare as we know it, but of simply renaming it. We want real welfare reform, and must therefore vote against the Conrad amendment.